



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City Receives Orthophosphate Treatment from the Washington Aqueduct

FALLS CHURCH, VA. –The Environmental Protection Agency's Technical Expert Working Group recommended full system implementation of orthophosphate treatment for all of the Washington Aqueduct's customers – Washington, D.C. Arlington County, Virginia and the City of Falls Church, Virginia. To reduce the elevated lead levels found only in Washington, D.C. homes, the Washington Aqueduct, which supplies and treats the City's water, will begin a proven treatment technique to reduce the lead that enters the water through lead-based plumbing. By applying a food-grade chemical used by utilities nationwide, orthophosphate will aid in corrosion control within our water supply.

In June the Washington Aqueduct began adding orthophosphate to water being pumped to a small area in Northwest Washington, D.C. to gauge its effects on the distribution system and customers. The EPA made the recommendation to implement the orthophosphate treatment throughout the Aqueduct's entire system after reviewing those preliminary results, which showed no water quality monitoring results that would warrant delaying full system application of orthophosphate as a corrosion inhibitor.

The Technical Expert Working Group, which comprises representatives from DC WASA, the Washington Aqueduct, DC Department of Health, EPA, the Centers for Disease Control, Arlington County, Virginia and the City of Falls Church, was formed in February to coordinate research and recommend treatment strategies to reduce the elevated lead levels found at the tap in homes in Washington, D.C. served by lead service lines. On April 15, the group recommended orthophosphate, a corrosion inhibitor, due to its successful use in other large systems.

In preparing to receive the orthophosphate treatment, the City began flushing its water lines in late July to clean out the sediment by opening fire hydrants and allowing them to flow freely for a short period of time. Although the City has reported that it has no significant lead levels in its water supply, the City will still receive the orthophosphate treatment as an added measure for its water customers. This chemical addition is occurring in response to the high levels of lead that have been found in homes in Washington, D.C. that have lead service lines. The Washington Aqueduct supplies water to Arlington and Falls Church as well as to the District, and thus the City will be receiving water with this additional treatment enhancement. Treatment will begin on Monday, August 23, 2004 in Falls Church City with water customers noticing no change in the taste, odor, or appearance of their drinking water.

For more information, please contact the City's Environmental Services Department at 703-248-5080 or visit www.ci.falls-church.va.us.

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